

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIEST 00260 301918Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 COME-00 /021 W
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R 301600Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL TRIESTE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0886
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMCONSUL FLORENCE
FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

UNCLAS TRIESTE 0260

DEPT FOR EB/TRA/MA
ROME FOR SCAFIDI

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EWWT
SUBJ: PORT CONGESTION SURCHARGE IN VENICE

REF: STATE 128060

1. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY THE VENICE PORT AUTHORITY THAT WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE SINGLE PERIOD OF ONE OR TWO DAYS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF APRIL 1978, THE PORT OF VENICE HAS NEVER BEEN CONGESTED AND IS MOST UNLIKELY TO BE SO IN THE FUTURE. SEVERAL LARGE SHIPPING AGENTS, INCLUDING THE VENICE AGENTS FOR THE D'AMICO LINE, AND THE VENICE PORT AUTHORITY, HAVE UNANIMOUSLY EMPHASIZED THE NONCONGESTED ASPECT OF THE PORT OF VENICE AND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SURCHARGE ENFORCED. THE PORT AUTHORITY APPARENTLY INTENDS TO CARRY ITS PROTEST AGAINST THE SURCHARGE TO HIGHER LEVELS, NAMELY THE VENETO REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AND, IF NECESSARY, THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

2. THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSLATION OF THE VENICE PORT AUTHORITY CABLE TO THE CONSULATE RECEIVED MAY 25:
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QUOTE
TO: AMERICAN CONSULATE, TRIESTE

I WISH TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION THE INCREDIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES RESULTING IN A 25 PERCENT PORT CONGESTION SURCHARGE ON VENICE CARGOS BY CONFERENCES DEALING WITH

MARITIME TRAFFIC BETWEEN CANADA-US-CENTRAL AMERICA-PACIFIC COAST AND ITALY (MEDITERRANIAN NORTH PACIFIC COAST FREIGHT CONFERENCE AND CENTRAL AMERICA CONFERENCE). THE DECISION WHICH WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN REQUESTED BY THE D'AMICO SHIPPING COMPANY STEMS FROM THE SLOW UNLOADING OF ITS VESSEL, THE ARCONAFTIS, WHICH ARRIVED IN VENICE APRIL 11, 1978 WITH BULK CARGO AND CONTAINERS. THE FOURTEEN DAYS REQUIRED TO UNLOAD THE ARCONAFTIS CAN ONLY IN SMALL PART BE ATTRIBUTED TO AN EXCEPTIONAL MARITIME AFFLUENCE WHICH WHILE COMMON ALSO TO OTHER ADRIATIC PORTS DID NOT CAUSE WAITING AT ANCHOR IN VENICE. CONVERSELY, UNLOADING OPERATIONS FOR THE ARCONAFTIS WERE TO A GREATER DEGREE SLOWED DOWN BY EXCEEDINGLY POOR STOWAGE (CONTAINERS STREWN AMONG COTTON BALES AND COTTON BALES WHICH HAD SLID INTO THE HOLD) AND REQUIRED THE VENICE SPECIAL WORK COMMITTEE TO ADOPT PARTICULAR HANDLING AND SAFETY MEASURES ALSO AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST ACCIDENTS TO PORT WORKERS.

EVEN IF THE FOREGOING IS DISPUTED, I FIND IT UNFAIR TO JUDGE A PORT'S OPERATIONS FROM A SINGLE INCIDENT AND THEREFROM TO APPLY SUCH PUNITIVE MEASURES AS TO PREJUDICE THE GOOD MARITIME RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VENICE AND THE COUNTRIES IN QUESTION. WITH A VIEW TO DEMONSTRATING THE ABSENCE OF GROUNDS OF THE SURCHARGE APPLIED, AN INVESTIGATION HAS BEEN MADE INTO UNCLASSIFIED

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THE PORT SITUATION AT THAT TIME AND OF THE OPERATIONAL ASPECTS RELATED TO SHIPS FROM THE AFOREMENTIONED COUNTRIES AND BELONGING TO THE LINES AFFECTED BY SUCH SURCHARGE. SUCH INVESTIGATION HAS SHOWN THE FOLLOWING:

- NO SHIP AT ANCHOR
- NO SHIP AWAITING MOORAGE
- OPERATIONS IN ALL CASES ASSURED WITH A 2.23 GANG AVERAGE PER SHIFT
- MINIMUM NUMBER OF GANGS 1, MAXIMUM 4
- HANDLING TIMES SATISFACTORY AND IN NO CASE HIGHER THAN NORMAL PORT AVERAGES

IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, VENICE CANNOT BE CONSIDERED CONGESTED. TO THE CONTRARY, THE PORT HAS SHOWN A TRAFFIC HANDLING EFFICIENCY FROM THE AFOREMENTIONED COUNTRIES EVEN AT A TIME OF EXCEPTIONAL FREIGHT UNLOADING, PARTICULARLY OF COTTON. IF ANY PORT OPERATIONAL FLAW CAME TO LIGHT A REMEDY WAS, AS ALWAYS, PROMPTLY FOUND.

I FEEL THAT ON THE BASIS OF THE PROBLEM AS SET FORTH, AND IN REGARD TO WHICH I AM AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS ALL FURTHER DETAILS, THE CONSULATE WILL BRING THE MATTER TO THE ATTENTION OF THE APPROPRIATE AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ENDEAVOR TO HAVING THIS INIQUITOUS MEASURE REMOVED WITH UTMOST URGENCY.

SIGNED: ADMIRAL SERGIO STOCCHETTI
PORT AUTHORITY

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3. AMCONSUL TRIESTE HAS RECEIVED TO DATE SIMILAR MESSAGES,
PROTESTING THE SURCHARGE FROM MARIO RIGO, MAYOR OF VENICE
AND LUCIO STRUMENDO, PRESIDENT, VENICE PROVINCE. MOEN.

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